Cultural Issues Related to Equal Opportunity

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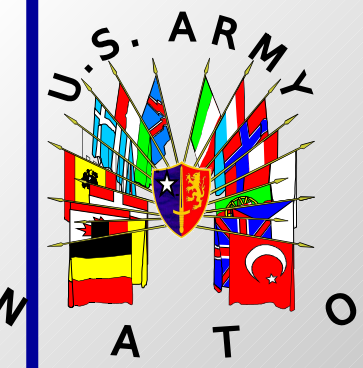

Overview

- Introduction
- Practical Exercises
- Symbolism

Introduction

The military is the most culturally and racially diverse US organization. The results of meeting and mixing with people that seem different from ourselves can cause culture shock.

Resistance to making adjustments in differences
in behavior, speech, dress, etc., can create problems
not only for soldiers, but also for their leaders. It is

Practical Exercise 1

Situation: You are the PSG within a company sized element. Several white soldiers have complained about Puerto Rican (P.R.) soldiers displaying the P.R. flag in their privately owned vehicles (POVs). They perceive P.R. soldiers love Puerto Rico more than they love the U.S. The white Soldiers request a policy be established to ban displaying of national flags (of any culture) on military

Question Practical Exercise 1

What are the EO issues and concerns
from this scenario? What actions if any
should the commander take to address the concerns of your soldiers?

Answer Part I, Practical Exercise 1

Displaying of national or cultural flags and
symbols is a privilege that can be withdrawn.
Should your commander feel displaying certain symbols in the unit area is detrimental to team work and unit cohesion, he/she has the authority to withdraw the

Answer

Part II, Practical Exercise 1

If the command determines that the perception about displaying the P.R. flag is one of misunderstanding then it may be appropriate to conduct cultural awareness training. However leaders should not overlook that displaying certain

Practical Exercise 2

You are the squad leader in an in
unit. While walking through you
unit area, you over hear two Afri
American soldiers in your squad
to one another as “home boys”.

Question Practical Exercise 2

How do you feel about the soldie
calling each other “home boy”?
Should you take any action? If s
what and why?

Answer
Part I, Practical Exercise 2

"Home boy" is used to show mutual ties. Sl
or cultural expressions may be used by sold
addressing one another. Leaders should be
cautious when such terms are used betwee
differing ranks. Such familiarity can cause
disciplinary problems. Sometimes these
expressions, when used by someone outside
cultural group, are derogatory. Leaders mu
aware of the impact cultural expression can
on a units EO climate.

Symbolism

Symbols are acts or objects which direct attention to something considered importa
Groups use symbols to belonging or membership. Like social Organization hav
their own symbols, so do various ethnic gr
To understand cultural symbolism we must
aware of the self-concepts which have evol
within culturally different groups. These concepts often developed from rejection ar
isolation from the power establishment.

Types of Group Symbology

- Gestures
- Clothing
- Language
- Cultural Symbolism
- Professional Symbolism

Gestures

Certain physical gestures or “body la
may be used by ethnic groups to show
or solidarity. The symbols used by dif
groups are often viewed as a lack of
professionalism, display of resentmen
hostility rather than gestures of unity
cultural expression.

Clothing

On special occasions many ethnic gr
express a pride in their culture by we
clothing that symbolizes their heritag
(Examples: Irish-Americans wearing
articles on St. Patrick's Day and
German Americans putting on liderh
(leather trousers) for German festiva

Language

Certain verbal expressions may also considered as symbols. Most of these express feelings of brotherhood or u (Example: The greeting, what's up b

Cultural Symbolism

A cultural symbol is an item or way of behaving that has a special meaning for a cultural group. For soldiers and leaders, knowing the importance of cultural symbo to individuals and group identity is vital to creating and maintaining effective human relations. This leads to unit cohesion. (Examples: Flags, piñatas, special hand sh hats, etc,.). These symbols help develop a healthy morale and esprit-de-corps.

Professional Symbolism

The military uniform in itself is a profe
symbol. It stands for the Army and all
fine traditions; the ribbons denote act
heroism and service; the unit crest ex
the heritage and traditions of the unit
the insignia indicates rank and status
the military structure

Summary

- Introduction
- Practical Exercises
- Symbolism